CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE FIVE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SIXTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 19 July 1990, at 10 a.m.

President: Bogumil Sujka (Poland)

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The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 566th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

In accordance with its programme of work, the Conference continues today its consideration of agenda item 4, "Chemical weapons". In conformity with rule 30 of the rules of procedure, however, any member wishing to do so may raise any subject relevant to the work of the Conference.

I have on my list of speakers for today the representatives of Sweden, Mexico and Argentina.

I now give the floor to the representative of Sweden, Ambassador Hyltenius.

Mr. HYLTENIUS (Sweden): Mr. President, let me first congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of this Conference. This month, we have already been able to register a major achievement in the decision to establish an ad hoc committee on the nuclear test ban. I am convinced that we will continue to work and to make progress under your stewardship characterized by your experience, tact and your sense of humour. I would also like to express the gratitude of my delegation to Ambassador de Rivero for the skilful manner in which he guided our work in the month of June.

The rapid political changes in the past year and progress achieved in the bilateral disarmament negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union have given rise to expectations for new opportunities in the multilateral field. There is, however, widespread uneasiness over the slow development especially in this Conference, which is a forum representing a broad cross-section of the international community. It is no wonder, therefore, that we have felt a strong need to consider possibilities of improving the effectiveness of the Conference.

It has been stated many times that unless the Conference on Disarmament is able to demonstrate progress in the near future, its very existence will be called into question. It is not this matter that worries me, it is the fate of the issues before us. There is no other multilateral forum that could negotiate the treaties which are needed. The Conference on Disarmament has demonstrated in the past that it is able to do so. There is no reason why it should not negotiate fruitfully also in the future - when the need for multilateral solutions will become even greater. The CD is a necessity and will continue to be so.

The political will to reach concrete agreements must be manifested at the negotiating table, and not only in general political declarations at various international conferences. The decision-making power obviously rests with the capitals, but there are a number of things that we can do here to facilitate the progress and the process, once the necessary political will of governments is forthcoming.

Ambassador Kamal of Pakistan is carrying out a series of open-ended consultations on the improved and effective functioning of the Conference on Disarmament. These consultations are very topical, since they focus on how

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the Conference on Disarmament should reform itself with a view to keeping pace with the swift changes in the international political climate. The Conference was conceived on the basis of a different political situation than we have today. It is obvious that the experiences gained over the years and the changing international situation must have an impact on the mode of functioning of the CD.

The consultations now initiated take place against the background of important contributions by the group of seven experienced colleagues. It touches upon basic issues, such as which items should be on our agenda, the functions of subsidiary bodies, working periods, etc.

My delegation will continue to take an active part in the dialogue so effectively promoted by the Chairman of the open-ended consultations. However, I also wish to take this opportunity to make a few remarks for the record on these important matters.

First, the issue of the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament. Without prejudice to what will come out of the open-ended consultations, delegations now seem to be prepared to look at new potential items for our agenda. At the same time, however, it appears that delegations are reluctant to see existing agenda items disappear.

My delegation considers most of the items of our agenda priority issues, focusing as they do on disarmament measures pertaining to weapons of mass destruction. It is true that very little has been achieved on some of the issues over the years. To abolish them, however, would be to succumb to defeatism. One reason for the lack of progress may in some instances have been that the time has simply not been ripe to deal with them in a sufficiently constructive manner. When international security relations will now proceed to a different posture, hopefully away from a reliance on nuclear weapons, new life could perhaps be blown into these items. It should then, for instance, be possible to make progress on the question of negative security assurances.

The nuclear items on our present agenda have received very little attention in the form of structured work. After having for so many years been overdue, the nuclear test-ban issue will, however, now be treated in an ad hoc committee. The Swedish delegation welcomes this positive development. A nuclear test ban would be an unequivocal manifestation of political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to bring a halt to continued qualitative improvements of nuclear weapons. It would, furthermore, be an important contribution to efforts to prevent horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. The instrumentality of a nuclear test ban in bringing about a cessation of the nuclear arms race and promoting nuclear disarmament cannot be questioned by anyone. A CTBT would be the single most important contribution to nuclear disarmament.

A nuclear test ban is of great relevance to agenda item 2, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". Other measures have been identified, inter alia in connection with the informal plenary meetings that have taken place this year. In some instances, similar or identical measures

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are also pertinent in the context of the prevention of nuclear war and to item 3 on our agenda. My delegation would have no difficulty in merging items 2 and 3. The essential thing is to bring about a more structured approach to these issues than hitherto. Various ideas have been discussed that could usefully be systematized by the secretariat in the form of a compilation.

Sweden has, for instance, taken up the question of naval nuclear disarmament, as well as naval confidence-building measures, under the two nuclear items just referred to. It goes without saying, however, that we would prefer to see these questions addressed as an autonomous agenda item. That would give more concerted attention to specific measures relating to naval nuclear disarmament and confidence-building measures.

My delegation is, of course, prepared to give its positive consideration also to other proposals for new agenda items. Some ideas have been presented during the informal consultations.

When it comes to the practical working methods of the Conference, my delegation is in favour of new solutions strengthening on-going negotiations. We have, therefore, supported the proposal for three sessions of the Conference as of next year, instead of the present two. This would not only give us all a chance to, at least, have one short leave during the year, but it would above all give delegations time to reflect on the on-going work, and, if need be, to receive instructions at more frequent intervals.

The Swedish delegation is also in favour of reducing the number of plenary meetings of the Conference. Moreover, we find it questionable whether it is meaningful to indicate specific topics for the plenary meetings. Delegations may wish to make omnibus statements from time to time or to address more than one subject at a time. This is especially true for statements made by visiting statesmen or government officials. Such contributions are welcome and should not be discouraged by a rigid programme of work.

It is a different matter with the subsidiary bodies. When there is a full-fledged negotiation going on, there is every reason to continue the work during the entire session. But if there is a low level of activity on a certain item, it would be better to concentrate the work in a limited number of committee meetings during a certain period. It would also make it easier to bring relevant experts to Geneva, if they were to meet only for a couple of weeks.

The Conference must not continue with the protracted consultations on the establishment of ad hoc committees that in some cases seem to have become a rule, preventing us from taking a more decisive approach to matters of substance. We must find a formula that could create a certain degree of automaticity for ad hoc committees to continue their work, once they have been established, while at the same time allowing for the potential improvement of their mandates. I realize, of course, the delicacy of the matter.

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Mandates could perhaps be formulated in a more general and standardized manner than hitherto. Experience shows that the wording is not necessarily decisive. If there is a will to reach agreement on an issue, a negotiating process will evolve in the ad hoc committee in question. If, on the other hand, there is no such will, it is of little importance whether that committee has a "negotiating mandate" or not.

This is a difficult issue, since there is no consensus as to some of the tasks to be entrusted to the Conference. It should, however, be kept in mind that the Conference on Disarmament is a negotiating body, and that it must not be prevented from discharging its responsibilities. Neither must it take over the role of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as a deliberative forum.

One question where positions obviously diverge is the decision-making process of the Conference. We can, of course, not escape from the political realities outside this conference room. It would thus seem futile to undertake any major negotiation without the consent of relevant States. A delegation may, however, express that it will not prevent consensus to establish a certain ad hoc committee. The delegation in question would still be free to participate in the concrete work on the issue whenever it sees fit to do so. Such an application of the consensus rule would be conducive to progress on some important issues on the agenda.

My delegation wishes to underline the useful contributions to the work of the Conference that have been and are being made by non-members. Such participation should be encouraged and facilitated to the extent possible, not least in the perspective of promoting the prospects of universal adherence to agreements under negotiation in the Conference. Also on this question, we must devote our time and efforts to the substantive issues before us and not lose time on recurrent discussions of applications from non-member States. At least for those States and Governments which take part in the work of United Nations General Assembly or its subsidiary bodies, applications for participation as non-members in the work of the CD should be granted automatically.

The Swedish delegation has expressed its serious concern that we have not yet, after so many years, been able to settle the question of the expansion of the membership of the Conference. It is high time to take a concrete decision. My delegation hopes a consensus will crystallize in the very near future.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Sweden for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Marín Bosch.

Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, please accept the congratulations of the Mexican delegation on the way in which you have been conducting our proceedings in this month of July. We are sure that these proceedings will be successful. Permit me also to register our appreciation for the work carried out in June by Ambassador Oswaldo de Rivero and the other members of the Peruvian delegation.

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The history of negotiations on chemical weapons is the longest of all the multilateral disarmament negotiations. The 1925 Geneva Protocol, in spite of its limited scope, is the first instrument whereby the community of nations expressed its rejection of this kind of weapon. However, in spite of the efforts made by the Conference on Disarmament and the organs which preceded it, the international community today, 65 years later, remains without a convention totally prohibiting chemical weapons.

Without wishing to make an exhaustive inventory of the deliberations on this subject, it is worth recalling that, at the end of the 1960s, hardly had the negotiations on the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons been concluded than it was recognized that verification was one of the main obstacles to the conclusion of a convention totally prohibiting chemical and biological weapons. Despite this, it is being proposed that we draw a distinction between chemical and biological weapons and negotiate an agreement which would prohibit only the latter. In introducing this proposal, document ENDC/231 of 16 August 1968, the representative of the United Kingdom, Mr. Mulley, said:

> "I recognize that the greatest difficulty we have to face is that of verification, since understandably parties to any arms control or disarmament agreement are entitled to be reasonably satisfied to the greatest practicable extent that other parties are carrying out their obligations under the agreement. This principle is well illustrated by the safeguards requirements of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (ENDC/226, article III). After much study, we have been obliged to conclude that no comparable system is possible for microbiological or chemical weapons. Any such system would be so intrusive as to be quite unacceptable, and even then could not be fully effective. The principal difficulty arises from the fact that almost all the material and equipment with which we are trying to deal have legitimate peaceful purposes; and it would be wrong to inhibit work of real value to humanity, in combating disease, for example, and impracticable to inspect every laboratory in every country. We must accept, therefore, that no verification is possible in the sense of the term as we normally use it in disarmament discussions.
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> Thus, we must make a choice - balance the risks of evasion if we go ahead with the formulation of new obligations, against the risks for the world if we do nothing and allow the fears of eventual use of microbiological methods of warfare to continue and intensify. My choice is emphatically to go ahead; we cannot afford to do nothing. While we cannot offer a fully effective system of verification, and we believe it is beyond the wit of man to devise one, we can provide arrangements which will satisfy States, given the intractable nature of the problem, that they will not be exposing themselves to unacceptable risks."

Right from the beginning serious reservations were entered about this proposal. It was pointed out, inter alia, that it would be tantamount in practice to postponing indefinitely the total prohibition of chemical weapons. Nevertheless, three years later, the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament concluded its work on the draft Convention on the Prohibition of

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the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction. A few months later, the convention was to be approved by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolution 2826(XXVI) of 16 December 1971.

The speed with which the negotiations on this Convention were concluded illustrates a very simple point: when there is political will to achieve an agreement - irrespective of the reasons that gave rise to the instrument - not even the absolute impossibility of succeeding in verifying its observance can prevent it.

Furthermore, it is a regrettable fact that today, more than 20 years after the introduction of the proposal to deal separately with chemical and biological weapons, the fears then expressed that this would be tantamount to postponing indefinitely the total prohibition of chemical weapons are being confirmed.

In spite of the changes in the mandate of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons, in spite of the tireless efforts of its Chairman, Ambassador Hyltenius and the chairmen of the three Working Groups to advance the negotiations, both on the technical aspects and on the political aspects of the draft convention, my delegation has the impression that we are losing the impetus or "momentum" generated initially by the Paris Conference of January 1989 and strengthened by a series of international meetings which confirmed the urgency of concluding a convention totally prohibiting chemical weapons.

As we approach the end of this session of the Conference, and before we get down to the tedious task of "negotiating" the report we shall be presenting to the General Assembly, it would be worthwhile giving some thought to the reason why, on the subject on which we are focusing a high percentage of our energies - as is demonstrated by the statements in plenary, the tremendous number of working documents and the conference services assigned to the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons - it would seem that we are moving further away from the original objective of attaining a convention comprehensively banning chemical weapons.

A few weeks ago, at the Washington summit, the United States and the Soviet Union signed an agreement on the destruction and non-production of chemical weapons and the means of facilitating a multilateral convention prohibiting such weapons. We hope it will shortly enter into force so that the commitment to cease production of chemical weapons will be put into effect and the process of the destruction of these weapons will begin.

The Government of Mexico has stated that it neither posseses chemical weapons nor has any intention of acquiring them. So it is difficult for us to accept that the principal possessors of chemical weapons should arrogate to themselves the right to keep a percentage of their arsenals and reserve to themselves the right of veto, to determine, eight years after it enters into force, whether participation in the multilateral convention is sufficient to proceed to the total elimination of chemical weapons. If all our countries

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were to adopt such an attitude, there would be no disarmament treaties at all. Furthermore, we were surprised at the speed with which a set of unilateral conditions contained in a footnote to a document was transformed into a bilateral understanding.

Although my delegation welcomes the fact that this agreement reflects the efforts which have for so long been going on at the multilateral level, we regret that, in referring to the negotiations of the Conference on Disarmament, there is no concurrence with the objective of attaining a comprehensive, universal and non-discriminatory convention. Bilateral and multilateral negotiations on disarmament should facilitate and complement each other; progress at the bilateral level should not be used to postpone or impede action at the multilateral level.

The Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons is embarking on the difficult process of attempting to make progress in its deliberations in what has up to now been known as the "rolling text" and which we hope will shortly be transformed into a draft convention that can be submitted to the United Nations General Assembly for adoption. We would like now to make some comments on the questions considered at this session.

The open-ended consultations on "undiminished security" have been a forum in which there has been frank debate of essential matters regarding the draft convention which is under negotiation. They have reflected the general interest in attaining a convention that would attract universal adherence and the impracticality of concepts such as that of "chemical-weapons-capable States".

The question of verification has been the subject of particular attention at this session. It has been examined both in Working Group A and in the consultations held by the Chairman of the Committee on article IX of the draft convention. In this regard, we believe that, although certain details still need refining, the "rolling text" already contains the fundamental elements of an adequate verification régime.

In this context, the initiatives aimed at seeking perfection in the verification régime could be interpreted as delaying tactics or lack of political will to conclude the negotiations on the draft convention. We were therefore surprised that the delegation of the United Kingdom should have stressed that we should not take the easy way out, that we should not follow the example of the Biological Weapons Convention, and that verification has the highest priority.

Of course, verification is a basic element in agreements on arms limitation and disarmament, but the conclusion of negotiations on the total prohibition of chemical weapons should not be subject to the perfecting ad infinitum of the verification régime. Ad infinitum would mean in this case ad Kalendas Graecas.

Verification of compliance is intimately linked with States parties' perceptions of security. The climate of détente and greater openness and transparency has already begun to have positive effects on our deliberations,

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as is shown by the growing acceptance of the concept of "challenge inspections". My delegation hopes that the bold initiative of the Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee in presenting a proposal for article IX as a whole will enable the deliberations on this question to advance. We also hope that the consultations by Ambassador García Moritán on article X, concerning assistance and protection against chemical weapons, will, in the medium term, enable the text to be transferred to Appendix I. In addition, we regret that article XI, concerning economical and technological co-operation in the field of peaceful chemical activities, should not have been the subject of the slightest consideration at this session.

Once again the Committee has opened its doors to representatives of the chemical industry for an exchange of views, both on the content of the draft convention and on the implications of its future application to activities of the chemical industry for civilian purposes. The frank dialogue which characterized those sessions of the Committee and the Industry Statement adopted within the content of the Government-Industry Conference against Chemical Weapons held in Canberra in September last year revealed the broad support of the chemical industry for the conclusion of our negotiations.

In so far as possible, the negotiations of the Conference on Disarmament will continue to give attention to the concerns expressed by the industrial representatives, but we should not forget that the fundamental objective of a convention prohibiting chemical weapons is the strengthening of the security of States, and not the protection of industrial interests. In any case, we should also bear in mind that trade unions in the chemical industry have begun to show interest in our negotiations, and we believe that the Committee should examine the comments that they have made on our draft convention.

In a few days the Committee will conclude its work so that the secretariat can begin the processing of the report that will be included in the one we shall be submitting to the United Nations General Assembly. My delegation fears that this report will not respond satisfactorily to the expectations expressed in resolutions 44/115 A and B and 44/119 D.

At times it might seem that the topic of chemical weapons is the only one on our agenda. In fact it does constitute the most immediate challenge to the credibility of the work of the Conference on Disarmament as a multilateral negotiating body for disarmament agreements.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina, Ambassador García Moritán.

Mr. GARCIA MORITAN (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Permit me to extend to you, Sir, the satisfaction of my delegation at the way in which you have been conducting our proceedings. Once again you have demonstrated the same diplomatic skills as when you were Chairman of the Ad hoc Committee on Chemical Weapons. As always you can count on the collaboration of my delegation.

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During the first part of this year's session, the Argentine delegation devoted a statement in plenary to agenda item 5, namely "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".

On that occasion, we shared with the delegations here some thoughts and pointed out that, in the circumstances obtaining, the evolution of the international situation and the dynamics of the Conference on Disarmament made clear the existence of undeniable potential for using confidence-building measures as a multilateral means of generating a climate of co-operation in the utilization and exploitation of outer space and perhaps also as an effective instrument for delaying or at least rendering less likely the onset of an arms race in space.

Drawing an analogy with the successful negotiating process under way in Vienna in the European regional context, we ventured to suggest the possibility of jointly shaping a régime which we christened the "Helsinki/Stockholm" of outer space, in an allusion to the capitals that have lent their names to two documents on confidence-building measures that in a sense constitute a model of transparency which we believe to be possible at the multilateral level.

Since that statement, the summit meeting in Washington last month and the meetings of the Warsaw Pact and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization have confirmed us in our belief that the path of transparency and mutual confidence can and should be utilized to its fullest possible extent.

In the case of outer space, this can take a number of forms. The Ad hoc Committee which is carrying out its work under the efficient and dedicated chairmanship of Canada has before it a series of specific proposals aimed at the same objective. All, in addition to their intrinsic merits, share the same approach to the agenda item, whether the proposal is to establish a code of conduct for space activities or a trajectography centre or to strengthen certain existing instruments in the present legal régime.

In that connection, my delegation wishes now to refer in some detail to a proposal which it has put forward in the Ad hoc Committee and which in fact conforms to a tradition of proposals that focused on the same point, namely the possibility of strengthening the régime established by the 1975 Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space. In this connection, we shall be circulating document CD/1015, which will also be circulated as a working paper of the Ad hoc Committee.

As we all know, the Registration Convention arose from the need to give precise and concrete effect to the considerations already present in a very general way in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty. In a practical sense, it also supplemented the provisions of the 1972 Convention on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects.

In brief, it is an instrument which, if it cannot be described as directly linked to disarmament or arms limitation, undeniably falls within the corpus of space law. From the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 1721 A (XVI), 1884 (XVIII) and 1962 (XVIII), this body of law

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displays an internal coherence and an interrelationship in its objectives, among which the use of outer space for the benefit and in the interests of the international community figures prominently.

Thus, the Registration Convention, by providing specific information about the nature and functions of objects launched into outer space, constitutes a de facto and indispensable data base for any subsequent development designed to generate confidence in the uses of outer space.

To deny in this sense the indisputable authority of the Registration Convention as a security measure would, in my opinion, simply be to ignore the nature of the instrument or, what is worse, to fail as a State party to comply with its provisions.

The Convention was drawn up on the premise, which we now recognize as wholly valid, that full knowledge of the presence of objects in outer space would bring about the necessary pre-conditions for the peaceful, harmonious and rational use of that environment. It was thought at the time that a limited number of unilateral obligations to provide information would be sufficient to give practical effect to that idea.

Article IV of the Registration Convention established a criterion on the basis of five elements of information: name of launching State; designator or registration number of the space object; date and location of launch; basic orbital parameters (nodal period, inclination, apogee and perigee); general function of the space object. It was also stipulated that all this information should be provided, as the Convention puts it, "as soon as practicable".

In this way, the Convention provided a basic technical framework. The instrument itself constituted an undeniable achievement, since the international community at that stage lacked an organized body of information on the subject. The beginnings of a legal structure, or at least an institutionalized judicial framework for achieving it, had thus been defined.

The practical results fell far short of even the most modest hopes which had been entertained. The flow of information generated as a result of the application of the Convention proved to be scanty, incomplete and tardy, being entirely dependent upon the will of the State which was to provide it and there was no possibility of encouraging States parties to the registration régime to comply more fully with the terms of the Agreement.

Thus, the absurd situation was reached that for many years not a single military-type mission was reported, although it is fully acknowledged today that the majority of activities in outer space are directly or indirectly associated with operations of a military nature.

The adoption of a minimalist formulation and the express granting in the text of the Convention of almost total discretion through the use of the expression "as soon as practicable" in fact neutralized an instrument whose potential remains enormous.

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Specifically, the régime should be strengthened in two ways. First, in respect of the scope of the information and secondly, with regard to its timeliness.

On the matter of scope, we would refer to the terms of article IV, paragraph 1 (e). We think that States parties should specify rather more than the "general function" of the space object - a criterion which makes it possible in theory to classify a military reconnaisance satellite as, for example, a communication satellite.

It is clear that a more precise register would be useful as a basis, for example, for the subsequent formulation of régimes to protect satellites used for civilian or even selected military purposes, bearing in mind its stabilizing effect.

It should be stressed that there is no reason why a more detailed description should affect the confidential nature of a mission or its effectiveness if there is an appropriate definition of what criteria constitute a complete and satisfactory general description of the functions of a space object.

With regard to other types of additional information, we believe that the definition of common criteria could be entrusted to a group of governmental experts under the auspices of the Conference through its Ad hoc Committee.

Turning now to the timeliness with which information is provided, it is clear that the terms in which the Convention is currently couched make it possible for information to come in late or even never, which is indeed the more probable.

A political decision appropriately supported on scientific and technical level must determine what are the acceptable time-limits in order to make the Convention useful and operational. This does not imply that the information must be provided before the launch. The time-limit for notification and the scope of information could be defined in each case in accordance with the nature and functions of the object to be launched.

To sum up, my delegation considers that a strengthening of the Registration Convention would not only better adapt that instrument to its original objectives, but also make it an important additional element for confidence-building and transparency in the peaceful uses of outer space.

In addition, it would have positive effects which complement other proposals before the Conference, such as those relating to the definition of a code of conduct on space activities, which require as a basic pre-condition a reliable and systematic survey of objects launched into outer space.

Last week the Conference had the welcome opportunity to receive Ambassador Burt and Ambassador Nazarkin, who presented a detailed diagnosis and prognosis of the negotiations which the United States and the Soviet Union are conducting on nuclear and space matters.

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On the subject of defence and outer space, we received confirmation once again that, unfortunately, in this area differences continue to be considerable and that, for the moment, no agreement is in sight. Nevertheless, from the information received it emerges clearly that perhaps the only sector in the context of the Space and Defense Talks in which there has been some progress is that of the drafting of a "Protocol on Predictability Measures" which will include an exchange of information, inspection of laboratories, etc.

The measures proposed by the United States delegation are focused on activities associated with the space programme of that country which might cause concern or mistrust on the part of the Soviet Union.

It is our belief that if on the bilateral level there is effective progress on initiatives such as that described, nothing should stand in the way of strengthening on the multilateral level an instrument like the Registration Convention, which undoubtedly supplements the criterion and the stated goals of a measure such as the one the United States has proposed in its bilateral negotiations with the Soviet Union.

If, as we believe, the criterion is the same and if the objectives coincide, everything is in place to embark on some concrete steps.

Our proposal seeks no more or less than to be a step forward.

The PRESIDENT: I thank the representative of Argentina for its statement and for the kind words he addressed to the Chair.

That concludes my list of speakers for today. I should like to ask if any other delegation wishes to take the floor at this stage. I see none.

I have requested the secretariat to circulate today the timetable of meetings to be held next week by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies. As usual, the timetable has been the subject of consultations with the chairmen of subsidiary bodies. It is merely indicative and can be changed if necessary. If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Conference adopts the timetable.

It was so decided.

I have no other business for today and I intend now to adjourn the plenary meeting. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will be held on Tuesday, 24 July, at 10 a.m. The plenary meeting stands adjourned.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.